

What is claimed is:

Sub 87 1. A method for operating gaming devices interconnected by a network to a host computer comprising:

5 creating a player account accessible by the host computer;
providing access to the account responsive to a first command initiated by a player at one of the gaming devices;
transferring credit from the account to the gaming device;
permitting gaming device play; and
10 cashing out from the gaming device responsive to a second command initiated by said player at said one gaming device.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer comprises:

15 issuing a tracking card to the player;
storing a player record on the host computer;
receiving an initial cash deposit from the player; and
crediting the deposit to the account.

20 3. The method of claim 2 wherein said gaming devices are in a casino and wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer is performed at a terminal connected to the network by an agent of the casino.

25 4. The method of claim 1 wherein said first command comprises insertion of a player tracking card into a card reader associated with said one gaming device.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein said second command comprises actuating a cash-out actuator at said one gaming device.

30 6. The method of claim 1 wherein said second command comprises actuating a cash-out actuator at said one gaming device.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein providing access to the account comprises transmitting data representing the player account over the network to a local memory associated with said one gaming device.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein transferring from the account to the gaming device comprises transferring data from the player account in the local memory to the credit meter.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein said method further comprises:
reading the credit meter on said one gaming device before transferring credit;
reading the credit meter on said one gaming device after transferring credit;
calculating the difference in the meter readings; and
comparing the calculated difference with the amount transferred.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein method further includes deducting the calculated difference from the account balance.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said method further comprises storing the amount transferred and the calculated difference at a location on the network remote from the player account.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein transferring credit from the account to the gaming device occurs responsive to a player-initiated command at said one gaming device.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the amount transferred is predetermined.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the amount transferred is a function of the balance in the player account.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein the amount transferred is a function of the classification of the player.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein said method further comprises:
measuring the time between each player account transaction; and
locking the account when the measured time exceeds at least one established criterion.

5 17. A method for operating gaming devices interconnected by a network to a host computer comprising:

creating a player account accessible by the host computer;

providing access to the account responsive to a first command initiated by a player at one of the gaming devices; and

10 transferring a predetermined credit from the account to the gaming device responsive to a transfer command initiated by the player at said one gaming device.

Sub B97 18. The method of claim 7 wherein said method further includes;
15 permitting gaming device play; and
cashing out from the gaming device responsive to a second command initiated by said player at said one gaming device.

19. The method of claim 7 wherein said method further includes;
20 permitting gaming device play; and
transferring all of the credit from the gaming device to the account responsive to a transfer command initiated by the player at said one gaming device.

20. The method of claim 7 wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer comprises:

25 issuing a tracking card to the player;

storing a player record on the host computer;

receiving an initial cash deposit from the player; and

crediting the deposit to the account.

30 21. The method of claim 20 wherein said gaming devices are in a casino and wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer is performed at a terminal connected to the network by an agent of the casino.

22. The method of claim 17 wherein said first command comprises insertion of a player tracking card into a card reader associated with said one gaming device.

23. The method of claim 18 wherein said second command comprises actuating a cash-out actuator at said one gaming device.

24. The method of claim 17 wherein providing access to the account comprises transmitting data representing the player account over the network to a local memory associated with said one gaming device.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein transferring a predetermined credit from the account to the gaming device comprises transferring data from the player account in the local memory to the credit meter.

26. The method of claim 17 wherein said method further comprises:
reading the credit meter on said one gaming device before transferring said predetermined credit;
reading the credit meter on said one gaming device after transferring said predetermined credit;
calculating the difference in the meter readings; and
comparing the calculated difference with the amount transferred.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein method further includes deducting the calculated difference from the account balance.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein said method further comprises storing the amount transferred and the calculated difference at a location on the network remote from the player account.

29. The method of claim 17 wherein the amount of said predetermined credit is a function of the balance in the player account.

Sub 11 30. The method of claim 17 wherein the amount of said predetermined credit transferred is a function of the classification of the player.

5 31. The method of claim 17 wherein said method further comprises:
measuring the time between each player account transaction; and
locking the account when the measured time exceeds at least one established criterion.

10 32. The method of claim 17 wherein the transfer command initiated by the player
at said one gaming device comprises actuating at least one of a plurality of actuators, each of
which is associated with a predetermined credit amount.

Sub B127 33. A method for operating gaming devices interconnected by a network to a host
computer comprising:

15 creating a player account accessible by the host computer;
providing access to the account responsive to a command initiated by a player at one
of the gaming devices;
reading the game meters a first time;
storing the first meter reading;
20 transferring credit between the account and the gaming device;
reading the game meters a second time; and
storing the second meter reading.

25 34. The method of claim 33 wherein said method further includes:
adjusting the account by the amount of money transferred between the account and
the gaming device; and
storing the account balance.

30 35. The method of claim 34 wherein the stored meter readings are at a different
location from the stored account balance.

36. The method of claim 33 wherein said method further comprises:
reading the meters before and after each transfer of credit between the account and the
gaming device; and
storing each meter reading.

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37. The method of claim 36 wherein said method further includes:
adjusting the account by the amount of money transferred between the account and
the gaming device; and
storing the account balance after each transfer.

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38. The method of claim 33 wherein creating a player account accessible by the
host computer comprises:
issuing a tracking card to the player;
storing a player record on the host computer;
15 receiving an initial cash deposit from the player; and
crediting the deposit to the account.

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39. The method of claim 38 wherein said gaming devices are in a casino and
wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer is performed at a terminal
connected to the network by an agent of the casino.

40. The method of claim 33 wherein said command comprises insertion of a
player tracking card into a card reader associated with said one gaming device.

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41. The method of claim 33 wherein providing access to the account comprises
transmitting data representing the player account over the network to a local memory
associated with said one gaming device.

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42. The method of claim 33 wherein transferring the credit between the account
and the gaming device comprises transferring data between the account in the local memory
and the gaming device.

43. The method of claim 33 wherein said method further comprises:
reading the credit meter on said one gaming device before transferring credit;
reading the credit meter on said one gaming device after transferring credit;
calculating the difference in the meter readings; and
5 comparing the calculated difference with the amount transferred.

44. The method of claim 43 wherein method further includes deducting the
calculated difference from the account balance.

10 45. The method of claim 44 wherein said method further comprises storing the
amount transferred and the calculated difference at a location on the network remote from the
player account.

15 46. The method of claim 33 wherein transferring credit between the account and
the gaming device occurs responsive to a player-initiated command at said one gaming
device.

47. The method of claim 46 wherein the amount transferred is predetermined.

20 48. The method of claim 47 wherein the amount transferred is a function of the
balance in the player account.

Sub 14/ 25 49. The method of claim 47 wherein the amount transferred is a function of the
classification of the player.

50. The method of claim 33 wherein said method further comprises:
measuring the time between each player account transaction; and
locking the account when the measured time exceeds at least one established criterion.

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